Editor's Note

A continual problem in timber harvesting is cost; cost in this industry is generally handled by investing more heavily in machinery that is more productive while requiring less labor. Capital costs are recovered by working long hours and extending logging seasons. Meanwhile, concerns over collateral logging damage continually increase. Loggers must push the limits while doing less damage. So, in this issue, we see the results of a project that looks at peat bogs and how forwarders might be adapted to allow extended logging seasons in the bogs. Also, we want full utilization while transporting only those products we need. Thus, another paper looks at bark loss on logs. Depending on where you are in the market, bark loss can be good or bad. Either way, it is difficult to assess just what the bark loss is during harvesting and transport.

Tighter knowledge of inventory and quality translates into tighter control of investment costs, but collecting the data adds to investment costs. Two promising technologies are airborne laser scanning of forest stands and acoustic velocities in tree stems. Two of the papers in this issue look at how these technologies may be developed so that the industry can eventually benefit from near-real-time information that predicts wood quality with reasonable accuracy at low cost.

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